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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR MEETS GHANA'S MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

REF: SECSTATE 220728

1. (U) Summary: The Ambassador paid a courtesy call on Minister of Foreign Affairs Nana Akufo-Addo on December 7 and discussed the Millenium Challenge Account (MCA) proposal, regional issues, the WTO Ministerial in Hong Kong, the Iraqi elections and Ghana's new seat on the UN Security Council. End Summary.

MCA PROGRESS

2. (U) The Ambassador informed the Minister that a Millenium Challenge Corporation (MCC) team led by Managing Director Maureen Harrington was currently visiting Ghana and included the new country director, Jonathan Bloom. She added that a new office for MCC would soon open in Accra and that she planned to do a joint press event with the Government of Ghana in February or March 2006 to show that Ghana's MCA proposal was on track.

LIBERIA'S CHALLENGES

3. (SBU) Akufo-Addo was upbeat about Liberia's prospects for democratization and peace under the newly elected president, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf. The Minister expressed concern, however, that the Government of Liberia would be unable to maintain stability and rebuild the economy without international assistance. He asked whether the U.S. government would be in a position to assist Liberia. The Ambassador recounted A/S Jendayi Frazer's remark that Liberia cannot fail and suggested that U.S. assistance was likely.

IVORIAN DISARMAMENT

4. (SBU) The Minister regarded recent developments in Cote d'Ivoire in a similarly positive light. The Ambassador mentioned that she met Cote d'Ivoire's newly appointed transitional Prime Minister Charles Banny in 2004. Akufo-Addo spoke highly of Banny's abilities and said that Banny had been "a big hit" at a recent conference in Bamako.

5. (SBU) The Minister said total disarmament was unlikely in Cote d'Ivoire but "sufficient disarmament to allow credible elections" would put the country on the right path. Banny's central task is, according to Akufo-Addo, achieving peace with hope for a brighter future.

WTO ISSUES

6. (SBU) In discussing the WTO Ministerial in Hong Kong, Akufo-Addo noted that Minister of Trade and Industry Alan Kyerematen had spoken at length on African nations' stances. Akufo-Addo called the U.S. government's proposal to eliminate agricultural tariffs "very, very, very constructive" and requested more specifics on the timeframe for tariffs to be eliminated. (Note: The Economics section delivered these details to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs both prior to this meeting and subsequently.)

IRAQI ELECTIONS

7. (SBU) The Ambassador explained the importance of the December 15 Iraqi elections and requested that the Government of Ghana issue a statement of support (per refTel). Akufo-Addo acknowledged the request but did not commit to any action.

UNSC SEAT

8. (SBU) Akufo-Addo said expanding the UNSC, assisting UN reforms, and peace efforts in both Cote d'Ivoire and the

Democratic Republic of Congo were the Government of Ghana's top priorities for the UN. He noted that he led the successful effort to win consensus within the African Union for backing permanent UNSC seats for Africa. The Minister conceded, however, that this consensus later fell apart. "Divisions that are elsewhere in the world appear to be resurfacing in Africa," he said.

BRIDGEWATER